DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 321 207 CG 022 656

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TITLE Challenging the High Risk Student--A Model for After-School Involvement of Adolescents.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Human Development Services (DHHS), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 27 Mar 90
GRANT 90-PD0141
NOTE 42p.; Paper presented at the Annual National Dropout Prevention Conference (Nashville, TN, March 27, 1990). Also supported in part by the Boys and Girls Clubs of Alachua County, Gainesville, FL.
PUB TYPE Reports - General (140) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adolescents; At Risk Persons; Community Programs; High Schools; High School Students; Middle Schools; Motivation; *Prevention; Program Effectiveness; Research Needs; *Youth Problems
IDENTIFIERS Boys Clubs of America; Middle School Students

ABSTRACT

Adolescents at high risk for not making a successful transition into adulthood may become school dropouts, abuse drugs and other substances, exhibit poor problem-solving skills, and display a wide variety of nonproductive or destructive behaviors. An after-school program, Youth 2000 Visions, was designed to assist local adolescents in addressing and confronting problems they face. Implemented in a medium sized southeastern community and sponsored by a Boys and Girls Club, Youth 2000 Visions represented a collaborative community-based program aimed at bringing low- and high-risk adolescents together to create motivational and educational messages about social issues. Youth Teams worked with local businesses to create and disseminate their messages. Outcome data on a pilot program involving 48 middle/high school students suggest that the Youth Team approach may be a fruitful addition to traditional community-based programs. Youth 2000 Visions represents a pilot program and, as such, calls for additional research to document program effectiveness and the relative importance of various program components. Nonetheless, the Youth Team concept appears to hold promise as a context for high- and low-risk adolescents to positively affect their own lives and the lives of their peers. (Author/ABL)

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Challenging the High Risk Student--A Model for After School Involvement of Adolescents[1,2]

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RUNNING HEAD: Challenging High Risk Youth

[1]This presentation and project were supported in part by the U.S. Office of Human Development Services, Grant No. 90-PD0141, and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Alachua County, Gainesville, Florida. The presentation was made at the National Dropout Prevention Conference, March 27, 1990, Nashville, Tennessee.

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CG022656

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Abstract

Adolescents at high risk for not making a successful transition into adulthood may become school dropouts, abuse drugs and other substances, exhibit poor problem-solving skills, and display a wide variety of nonproductive or destructive behaviors. An after-school program, Youth 2000 Visions, designed to assist local adolescents in addressing and confronting problems they face is described. Sponsored by the Boys Club, Youth 2000 Visions represented a collaborative community-based program aimed at bringing low- and high-risk adolescents together to create motivational and educational messages about social issues. Youth Teams worked with local businesses to create and disseminate their messages. A rationale for and practical information on how community agencies might implement the Youth 2000 Visions concept are presented. Outcome data on a pilot program involving 48 middle/high school students are discussed.

Challenging the High Risk Student--A Model for After School Involvement of Adolescents

Youth of today make decisions daily that may affect them for a lifetime; many are at high risk for making poor decisions. Children from single parent homes, low socio-economic (Kolstad & Owings, 1986) and minority groups (Rumberger, 1987), violent families (Sandberg, 1987), who are male (Kolstad & Owings, 1986), and have handicapping conditions (Butler-Nalin & Padilla, 1989; Edgar, 1987; Neel, Meadows, Levine, & Edgar, 1988), for example, are at increased risk for substance/drug abuse, teenage pregnancy/parenthood, school dropout, and other involvements which may influence negatively their futures and developmental potential. Sensing that they have little stake in society or control over their future, many adolescents feel alienated and powerless. For young adults, the situation of not being taken seriously is conducive to irresponsible behavior.

Remediation of the major pitfalls of adolescence is costly. Most educators, health and human service providers, juvenile justice workers, parents, and even politicians support the contention that prevention is preferable to remediation (Capuzzi & Golden, 1988; Kerr, Nelson, & Lambert, 1987). Answers to the question of how to impact youth to be motivated and able to exercise choice judiciously in their daily lives remain elusive. Clearly, the adolescent experience has changed dramatically in recent years, and more effective approaches are required to

foster a sense of community in youth and develop their self-identity, problem-solving ability, and a positive expectation for the future. Since young people directly experience and observe the causes and consequences of societal problems such as substance abuse, teenage pregnancy and illiteracy, we concluded that youth themselves constitute a valuable resource in the search for solutions to such problems. We felt that local teenagers have a distinct perspective, concern, and contribution to bring to community efforts which focus on youth issues and set a goal of operationalizing that conviction.

Consequently, a community-based after school program referred to as Youth 2000 Visions was designed. Youth 2000 Visions was set up to provide young people with opportunities to mutually identify, problem-solve, and act upon issues which confront them and their peers. Youth Teams were established to create educational and motivational messages about pressing local teen issues. These Youth Teams then reach out to other youth by disseminating their messages through television, videotape productions, print, radio, and the performing arts. Youth Teams, including adolescents at high risk for not successfully making the transition to adulthood, become acquainted with community businesses and agencies as they develop their messages and products. The interpersonal skills and technical knowledge of each member is expanded through these interactions. The teens

also develop an understanding of how they can contribute in a meaningful way to their local community. More specifically, Youth 2000 Visions had five major goals:

1. To increase adolescents' understanding of social conditions that threaten their successful transition to adulthood.

2. To increase adolescents' knowledge and skill in group goal setting, problem-solving, and task completion.

3. To enable adolescents to generate audiovisual and print mediated educational and motivational messages about critical issues in their lives.

4. To assist adolescents in disseminating their messages to the local community.

5. To build positive associations between adolescents and specific businesses, agencies, and people in key positions in the community.

The remainder of this manuscript is devoted to discussing Youth 2000 Visions (Y2000V) in relative detail. The first section presents a brief rationale for creating Youth Teams whose goal is to address problems of local teenagers. Second, a description of the main components of the Y2000V is provided. Third, preliminary data on program outcomes are presented. Expansion of community-based programs to offer high risk students activities which typically are reserved for the gifted, advanced,

or talented student is advocated. Recommendations for youth organizations wishing to develop Youth Teams are offered.

Youth Teams: A Central Concept of Y2000V

Preadolescence and adolescence comprise the two broad transitional stages between childhood and adulthood. These stages of growth and development are marked normally by various cognitive, emotional, and social changes including neuro-physiological maturation, increased independence of thought and action, and greater reliance on susceptibility to peer pressure (Lerner & Foch, 1987). Although the questions of how to structure activities to gain the attention, sustain the interest, and enhance the learning of youngsters within this age band have not been answered fully, the literature provides guidance for designing programs for youth. Factors and issues considered in the conceptualization of Y2000V are discussed briefly below.

Cooperative Learning and Heterogeneous Grouping

The benefits of small group teaching/learning formats (e.g., Johnson & Johnson, 1980, 1986) and the use of peers to facilitate the social (e.g., Strain, Odom, & McConnell, 1984) and academic (e.g., Slavin, 1981) growth of students with learning or social disabilities is documented in the literature. Strategies which integrate youngsters of varying abilities and promote peer collaboration appear to be superior to competition and individualistic learning (Gottlieb & Leyser, 1980; Johnson &

Johnson, 1980) or simply placing diverse individuals in proximity to one another (Strain, 1981).

Isolation and Alienation

To many youth, opportunity to access the good things in life via conventional routes seem unattainable while others have lost all motivation to succeed in the mainstream. The literature, for example, is replete with data documenting a strong relationship between feelings of alienation and exclusion and school dropout, parasuicides and delinquency (Firestone, Rosenblum, & Webb, 1987; LeCompte, 1987; Kerr, Nelson, & Lambert, 1987). Decisions to quit school, get pregnant, and/or become involved with drugs or other illegal activity often are attributed to an hostile and uncaring environment (Henggeler, 1989). Lacking a positive sense of purpose in relation to the greater community, these individuals often seek approval from peers who similarly have experienced rejection and failure (Ekstrom, Goerts, Pollack, & Rock, 1986; Henggeler, 1989).

Community Involvement

Limited resources alone are sufficient justification for cooperation among businesses and community agencies. Beyond the obvious economic benefit, however, there are other compelling reasons for community commitment to programs for youth. First, working in partnerships may reduce duplication of services and solve problems in ways not feasible for individual organizations. Second, both the positive and negative outcomes of the adolescent

experience have a direct impact on the community. The local community itself has the most to gain from being involved in prevention programs. It is well recognized that alienated youth and young adults are frequently the perpetrators of property damage and violent crimes (Kauffman, 1989; Kerr, Nelson, & Lambert, 1989). Third, and perhaps most importantly, positive experiences interacting with community businesses and agencies by youth may facilitate the transition to adulthood. Knowledge and skills acquired while working in community-based programs (e.g., interacting with adults in positions of authority) are very likely to be helpful in adulthood (e.g., keeping a job). Furthermore, if adolescents have experienced success interacting with community leaders, they are less likely to perceive the establishment as unapproachable or hostile.

Goal Setting, Problem-Solving, and High Expectations

Success in adulthood often requires individuals to set goals, devise plans for accomplishing desired outcomes, exercise self-control in the pursuit of goals, and be motivated by progress toward goals. Such self-directed behavior often is absent from the repertoires of youth with behavioral, learning, and social-emotional difficulties. Relatedly, when teachers, parents, employers, and youth expect success, it is more likely to occur. That is, in a social milieu where there is a high expectation for a positive outcome, it is more probable that such an outcome will be achieved than when neutral or negative

expectations exist. Strahan (1988) reports research of Wehlage and Rutter who found that a variable they referred to as the academic function accounted for 89% of the variance between dropouts, "stay-ins," and "college-bound" students. The most powerful factor within this function was "expected school attainment." Youth with behavioral excesses and deficiencies typically have decreased self-directed behavior, have failed academically and socially (Kauffman, 1989), have low expectations for graduation or further schooling, and spend a large portion of their day in social/learning contexts which require minimal performance.

After School Activities

The high incidence of single parent families and other changes in traditional family structure has led to a significant increase in the number of youngsters left without supervision during the after school hours (The Condition of Education, 1989). While programs often exist to assist parents of young children, less is available for older children who are viewed as "able to take care of themselves." Unfortunately, for many youth the after school hours are filled with nonproductive and destructive behavior. For example, 43% of the violence crimes against youth are committed by offenders between the ages of 15 - 17 (Criminal Victimization in the U.S., 1984).

Youth 2000 Visions was designed to include strategies which emphasized peer cooperation, small group teaming, self-directed

behavior, mutual problem-solving, and community-based learning. Youth activities were carried out after school and in a manner which reinforced the belief that the youth can set and achieve socially constructive goals. A detailed description of Y2000V follows.

Youth 2000 Visions: Program Components

The purpose of the Y2000V was to create a community supported program which would provide high-and low-risk (pre)adolescents with a mechanism for positively confronting major problems in their lives and in the lives of other local youth. Y2000V was implemented in a medium sized southeastern community by a Boys and Girls Club is collaboration with local businesses, the school district, and a state university. The goal of bringing youth together was accomplished by creating five Youth Teams. These teams met weekly in cycles ranging from 12 to 20 weeks, and addressed one of five topics: teenage pregnancy/parenthood, accidental and intentional injury/death, school dropout, illiteracy, and substance/drug abuse. The goal of each Youth Team was to create an educational or motivational product regarding their targeted problem. Each team selected a primary medium in which to deliver their message: radio, television, video, print/graphic arts or the performing arts.

Teams membership. Youth Teams consisting of 5 to 14 members formed the original pilot group. Youngsters on these Youth Teams represented diverse backgrounds, talents, and status. As can be

seen in Table 1, 48 students in 7th - 11th grade participated. Approximately 1/3 of the students were high risk students, and the remaining 2/3 were low risk. High risk students were youth who met two or more criteria: (1) low SES and minority, (2) retained in one or more grades, (3) underachieving in reading or math, (4) special services at school, (5) high rate of absenteeism, and (6) failing more than two classes. Low risk students were students who exhibited all of the following: (1) historically had achieved at or above grade level, (2) were receiving average or above average grades when the program began, (3) were not discipline problems, (4) participated in extracurricular school activities, (5) were perceived as emotionally stable, and (6) were perceived as highly likely to graduate from high school. School guidance counselors, teachers, and Team Facilitators provided this information.

Team Facilitators. One Boys and Girls Club staff member served as the Team Facilitator, and a community volunteer served as an Assistant Facilitator on each of five Youth Teams. Community volunteers including teachers, practicum students in education and special education, and parents served as Assistant Facilitators. Parents did not serve on teams with their own children. The role of these adults was to guide youth interactions, goal setting, problem-solving, and product development. The Team Facilitator monitored and evaluated the overall progress of the Youth Teams and reported the status of

each team to the Boys Club administration on a biweekly basis. Team Facilitators coordinated all activities involving local businesses. When a youth was absent from a meeting, the Team Facilitator telephoned or made a home visit.

Table 1.

Demographic Profile of Youth 2000 Visions Pilot Group Participants (N = 48)

Grade	Number	Other Characteristics	
7	14	Rural	9
8	12	Urban	39
9	11	Black	13
10	5	White	35
11	6	High Risk	13
		Low Risk	35

Youth Team meetings. Each Youth Team met weekly for approximately 1 1/2 hours at one of two Boys and Girls Clubs facilities. During the summer outreach efforts led to holding meetings at community centers and other locations convenient to the youth.

Once the teams had selected their topic and medium, their weekly meetings served as forums for: (a) discussion about the topic, (b) brainstorming ideas for their message and the product,

(c) interacting with guest speakers, (d) planning and developing their product, and (e) visiting community businesses/agencies to produce their message. The first products required over five months to complete. Second cycle (i.e., summer session) products were completed in approximately three months. A sample scenario is presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

Scenario of a Youth Team Meeting

Time	Activity
5:15 - 5:25	Judy and Dan, Facilitator and Assistant Facilitator of Team 2 (Substance Abuse using Video), meet to review where the team stands at week 7 in the production cycle. Today the group will listen to a rap song written by three team members. The team will consider using it as the sound track to accompany a videotape they shot last week of kids playing on the streets in a local housing project. Judy makes sure the VCR is hooked up properly to the TV and that the sound of the audiocassette player is clear. Dan unwraps two pizzas donated by a local restaurant.
5:25 - 5:35	Eight of nine eighth grade team members arrive. Judy compliments everyone for being on time. She asks if anyone knows where Nathaniel is. Someone says Nathaniel is sick. She reminds team members of the 24 hour notification rule. She commissions Jeremy to call Nathaniel tomorrow and let him know the results of today's meeting. Judy points to the poster which shows a week-by-week timeline of their project. "By the end of today's meeting we have to decide whether Adam, Neisha, and Diego's song will be an appropriate voiceover for our videotape. We also need to decide whether we want to start the video with some statistics, either spoken or

(table continues)

Time	Activity
	presented on a graph. Next week we have an appointment with the technicians of Channel 52 who will show us how sound and picture get spliced together on a master tape."
5:35 - 5:50	Adam, Neisha, and Diego perform their song, backed up by percussion sounds they previously recorded at home on an audiocassette tape. Samantha says she can't understand all the words, but she loves the rap. Diego, Adam, and Neisha promise that they will bring a sheet with the verses written out to the next meeting. They talk through the second and third verse. Next, they do the song again with the rhythmic beat turned down. Everyone applauds.
5:50 - 6:05	There is spirited discussion as to whether the song should accompany the videotape. The videotape is intended to contrast the innocence of very young kids with the desperation of drug addicts. Four team members will impersonate addicts in 3 short vignettes which will be spliced between the playground scenes. Dan reminds the team to consider the audience. "Will middle school kids know what a 'basehead' is?" Judy encourages the team, "the last Youth 2000 Visions spot was shown on four different channels every afternoon for three months. I bet they will like your production just as much." The group decides to write a short introduction and conclusion to the video. The town's most popular disk jockey, a community volunteer, has offered to be the narrator.
6:05 - 6:20	The team breaks up into two small groups, one to write the introduction, and one to write the conclusion. They review their notes on a presentation made to the group in week 4 by the police detective in charge of drug education.
6:20 - 6:45	Each group writes, then reads its section to the other. Suggestions for toning down some statements

(table continues)

Time	Activity
	and punching up others are exchanged. Marshall and Brittany each agree to type the revised version in time for the visit to the TV station next week.
6:45 - 7:00	Judy and Dan go over the rules the TV station sent that apply to everyone visiting the mixing booth. Merrel announces that her mother has volunteered to take them to the station in her van, provided that everyone is ready to leave from the club at 4 p.m. Judy and Dan see that the three kids who have to leave by 6:55 to catch their ride do so. The other team members help clean up, then go to a different club activity scheduled for 7:15.
7:00 - 7:15	Judy and Dan review the accomplishments of the team meeting. They agree that the team is on schedule. Both feel that team involvement is excellent. Neisha, however, seemed unenthusiastic the last two meetings. Judy decides to call her and talk about how things are going. Dan says he will drive his car to the studio next week because he may have to leave early.

Recruiting procedures. Awareness and recruiting campaigns were conducted simultaneously in cooperation with the schools and community agencies. Display booths, posters and flyers, media announcements, and staff presentations to school assemblies and service agencies were used to introduce Y2000V to the community. Community youth agencies, committees and councils were contacted and used as emissaries, carrying information to other professionals, parents, and children about the program. These activities provided an excellent avenue for advertising the Boys and Girls Clubs' general mission and specific programs, and

thereby served a dual function for the sponsoring agency. In the course of recruitment, youth expressed many reasons for wanting to become involved ranging from, "It's something to do," to a deep concern for others. As one teen interviewed by a local newspaper stated, "It sounded like a way to help people, and I like helping people."

Large group socials. Large group activities were planned to provide occasions for the individual Youth Teams to develop a sense of belonging to a program of greater scope. Three times during the year all of the Youth Teams congregated for a social-recreational-informational exchange. Parents and the community were invited to attend displays and productions presented by the Youth Teams. At the first large group social, for example, the drug/substance abuse team (7th graders) put on a skit recasting the story of Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs. The wicked witch became a drug dealer, and the apple she gave Snow White was cocaine. A team member explained in an interview with a reporter, "The dwarfs were on drugs, too. They had names like Dusty, Speedy, Alkie, and Cokie. The prince was clean, so he was trying to save Snow White and the dwarfs." These events typically lasted 3 hours and included a presentation by each team followed by socializing, sports, dancing, or other recreational activities.

Advisory board. To involve the community more fully, an advisory board was created. The Y2000V advisory board consisted

of members of the business community, city and county law enforcement departments, the school district, parents, mental health services agencies, and university faculty. Meetings were held quarterly and always included presentations by Youth Teams. Advisory members were helpful in publicizing the program and providing input related primarily to staffing and program management issues.

Special Implementation Issues

The administrator of the community-based agency which implements a Y2000V program has a critical role in its success. Table 3 contains several issues administrators should consider carefully prior to the initiation of Youth Teams.

Table 3.

Issues for the Administrator

Key Considerations/Questions
1. Does Youth 2000 Visions fit the philosophy and goals of your organization? Will any modifications be needed to ensure success of the program?
2. Commit yourself and the organization wholeheartedly to the implementation of the program. Commitment is demonstrated by providing opportunity for all staff to: 1) learn about the program, 2) discuss it in detail, and 3) stay knowledgeable once it is underway.
3. Are qualified staff and/or volunteers available to implement the program? What type of inservice training are they likely to need?

(table continues)

Roles
11. The need for individual or family counseling may become apparent during a Youth Team meeting. Be prepared to refer a student or parent to possible agencies offering such services.
12. Constantly be on the alert for ways to promote Youth 2000 Visions and disseminate team messages. Open houses, special events which involve the full membership of the sponsoring agency, and participation in regional and national conferences by team members are suggested.

Table 5.

Responsibilities of Youth Team Facilitators

Facilitator and Assistant Facilitator Responsibilities
1. Youth Team Facilitators have responsibilities in three main areas: 1) recruiting members and overseeing Youth Teams, 2) establishing and employing community resources, and 3) integrating Youth 2000 Visions activities into the overall operation of the sponsoring youth agency.
2. Facilitators should establish a relationship with each team member. Positive personal contact reduces feelings of alienation and gives each youngster an opportunity to bond with at lest two caring adults in the community.
3. Involve the youngsters in planning and setting timelines. Meeting timelines, especially production timelines, is very important for maintaining motivation. When timelines cannot be met, team members should participate in determining realistic deadlines.
4. Youngsters miss meetings for many acceptable reasons. Emergencies arise. Whenever a team member misses a meeting,

(table continues)

Roles

trips related to different topics and different media. Field trips should be educational and expose the team to new sectors of the community.

5. Work with your administrators to establish a materials resource library of print and audiovisual materials pertaining to relevant topics and various media. Magazines and books that can be used by team members to learn more about their topics or media also can be identified with the help of the public librarian.

6. A small brochure or flyer describing the program is invaluable. A simple question-answer format can tell readers a lot in a short space. Questions might include such items as: What is Youth 2000 Visions? Is there a membership fee? May a member of Youth 2000 Visions participate in other Club activities? Who will work with the Youth Team? How do participants benefit? Are volunteers needed? How does the community support Youth 2000 Visions? Can parents be involved? How long will the program last? At what time and place will the Youth Teams meet?

7. Maintain open lines of communication with the director, staff and volunteers, team members, and their parents.

8. It is strongly recommended that participating youth be heterogeneously grouped. A mix of high and low risk youth is beneficial for both groups. Nonetheless, if circumstances do not permit such grouping, homogeneous teams can be effective.

9. Youth Team meetings can be held at the sponsoring organization or at a satellite site (e.g., a housing project or church).

10. Topics and team messages may be controversial; it is essential that a disclaimer be attached to all products. For example:

Views Expressed Are Those Of Team Members Of Youth 2000 Visions, A Boys Clubs Of Alachua County Group Club.

(table continues)

Table 4.

Facilitator and Assistant Facilitator Roles

Roles
Each person who serves as a Facilitator or Assistant Facilitator has something special to offer youth. It is important to remember that each Facilitator's personality and style of interacting will differ. This is an asset! However, keep in mind the goal of helping kids talk to each other and learn from one another. We must strive to develop our most facilitative style and be conscious of adults' tendency to direct and lead.
1. Together the Youth Team Facilitator and Assistant Facilitator are responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating the Youth 2000 Visions program. The way you work together serves as a model for your team. Model cooperative behavior.
2. Facilitators and Assistant Facilitators should meet together formally to review their roles and responsibilities and develop plans for recruiting participants and organizing teams. Facilitators also plan activities to assist the teams in selecting a topic and a medium, generating a message, developing a product, and disseminating the product. It is recommended that each team select one topic and one primary medium in which to work.
3. In some organizations, the Facilitator will be a volunteer and the Assistant Facilitator will be on staff. In other organizations this arrangement may be reversed. The person on staff is responsible for sharing with the volunteer all policies and procedures of the sponsoring organization. Generally speaking, the Facilitator assumes primary responsibility for the Youth Team meetings. In some instances experienced volunteers may serve as Facilitators and novice volunteers as Assistant Facilitators.
4. Establish a network with key agencies and community businesspersons before your first Youth Team meeting. Identify individuals who may serve as consultants, provide assistance in product development, and who have expertise in topics which hold high interest for youth. Plan field

(table continues)

Key Considerations/Questions

4. Assign an individual or team of individuals to oversee implementation of the program. This team may be comprised of Facilitators and Assistant Facilitators. They should report to the head of the sponsoring agency.

5. Develop an evaluation plan prior to implementing Youth 2000 Visions. Such a plan should include a means of monitoring progress toward objectives as well as achievement of the objectives.

6. Include discussion of Youth 2000 Visions at regularly scheduled staff meetings. Provide forums for staff and team members to make presentations on their projects.

7. Involve the community by utilizing the network of social agencies and businesses that already supports your organization. These community resources will be integral to the success of the program, especially in the areas of technical assistance, product development, and dissemination.

8. Youth 2000 Visions has five phases: 1) recruiting participants and organizing teams, 2) selecting the topic and medium, 3) generating the message, 4) developing a product, and 5) disseminating the product. The first phase may be considered the responsibility of the Facilitators and Assistant Facilitators. Youth Teams are responsible for phases 2 - 5. The Facilitators provide guidance and support during these phases.

9. Schedule three Youth Team cycles per year--one in the fall and one in the spring to correspond with the school year, and one in the summer.

10. Adapt to fit your local needs.

In addition to the administrator, Facilitators and Assistant Facilitators play a pivotal role in the execution of the program. Tables 4 and 5 contain information pertaining to the roles and responsibilities of Facilitators.

Facilitator and Assistant Facilitator Responsibilities

field trip, or other activity, the Facilitator should contact the youngster or the parent immediately. Facilitators should listen carefully to determine the reason(s) for the absence and work actively with the youngster to maintain participation.

5. Many people who work with adolescents (e.g., teachers, employers) spend considerable time giving direction, advice, and admonishment. A facilitative style is one which gently molds and guides the interactions of team members. Facilitators speak in a nonjudgmental, accepting manner in response to the opinions of youth. Questions are employed to stimulate reasoning skills and develop the natural inquisitiveness of youth.

6. Facilitators are advocates for their teams and for Youth 2000 Visions. All interactions with team members are opportunities to enhance their self-esteem and sense of well-being. Any contact with the community is an opportunity to publicize the goals and achievements of the program as well as those of the sponsoring agency.

In the present Y2000V program initial recruiting of youth proved to be a difficult task given that recruiting did not begin until 2 1/2 months into the school year. To counteract the disadvantage of a late start, substantial effort was put into recruitment. Once a youth expressed an interest in Y2000V, a Team Facilitator telephoned and had a face-to-face meeting with the teen. An effort was made to establish and maintain personal contact with all teens who indicated interest in the program. Evening meetings were scheduled for parents and the youth so they could learn more about the program. Participants were assigned

to the Youth Team that met at a time and place which best fit member needs.

One of the challenges reported by the Team Facilitators was overcoming their own sense of insecurity regarding how to organize and facilitate the Youth Teams. Since the Facilitators had leadership roles in their other club activities, assuming a less authoritarian role was difficult at times. Relatedly, the Facilitators reported a desire to learn strategies for increasing the verbal input of some youth while decreasing domination by others. To address these issues, biweekly staff meetings were held to brainstorm ideas, and consultants presented inservice workshops on managing and facilitating peer groups. Additionally, the Facilitators were asked to prepare weekly and six week plans for their team meetings. While these plans were not adhered to strictly, they did provide structure for the Facilitators. The Youth Team itself became increasingly responsible for preparing short- and long-term goal statements.

During the summer attendance of established Youth Teams was sporadic. The most effective utilization of staff, interns, and volunteer time occurred in instances where new teams were organized. Youth Teams created during the summer coalesced more rapidly than the teams organized during the school year. By conducting the program in the summer, Y2000V was extended to unserved youth. Team Facilitators had an opportunity to get a fresh start armed with knowledge and experience gained during the

school year. By the summer session Team Facilitators voiced confidence and pride in their ability to implement the Youth Team concept.

Youth 2000 Vision Outcomes

Youth 2000 Visions was designed to provide a diverse group of youth with opportunity to confront intellectually and in a hands-on manner problems which impede adolescents from making a successful transition into adulthood. The overall goal was achieved--a community-based program for high- and low-risk (pre)adolescents utilizing a Youth Team problem-solving approach was implemented and youth products disseminated.

Team Products

Table 6 presents a profile of the five pilot Youth Teams, the topics addressed and the mediated products each team produced. As can be seen, a variety of products were forthcoming from the Youth Team efforts. While each team expressed many viewpoints with regard to their topics, the main theme of each is capsulized here:

(1) Accidental/Intentional Injury Death--This team gathered information on the number and kinds of injuries and deaths that strike adolescents. Prepared with this information, the team created a video to convey the message that no problem is worth the price of badly hurting/killing yourself or others.

(2) Teenage Pregnancy/parenthood--The consensus of this team was that if you are going to have sex, it should be safe sex.

Table 6.

Team Profiles

Topic	Media	Grades	Products
Accidental/Intentional Injury Death	Video	9-11	Video
Teenage Pregnancy/ Parenthood	Performing Arts	9	Play* Short Stories
Drug/Substance	Television	7-8	Skit Commercial
Illiteracy	Print Graphic Arts	7-8	Mime Newsletter
School Dropout	Radio	7-8	Rap Song PSA

*The play was not presented; it was transposed into several short stories.

They felt unanimously that reliable birth control was important and disseminated this view with flyers and printed material.

(3) Drug/Substance Abuse--The message of this team focused on the negative consequences of drug use (particularly crack). This developed a commercial which showed that drugs kill.

(4) Illiteracy--This team stressed the notion that not being able to read and write can hurt you every day of your life. There are steps teens can take to become literate. "Don't be ashamed, but do something about it right now!"

(5) School Dropout--The message of this team was that "dropping out of school can ruin your life. You may never get a good job if you drop out. Don't drop out!"

In each Youth Team, the participants expended considerable time discussing the short- and long-term consequences of the above five categories of behavior. Team discussions were often animated, yet consensus was achieved with no apparent dissatisfaction among individual members. Once their primary message was agreed upon, the focus of the team's research and effort was upon developing the product.

Student Follow-On Interviews

A general assessment of the social validity of Y2000V was obtained by gathering information on the viewpoints of the primary consumer, the Youth Team members. Team members who participated at least 12 weeks in the program were administered a structured interview containing open and close ended questions (N = 24) pertaining to all aspects of the program. Staff not involved directly with the youth interviewed conducted the survey. A summary of the results of these interviews is presented in Table 7. As can be seen, a majority of both low-and high-risk students responded positively to questions related to

how they felt their participation in Y2000V had affected them. In general, the low risk youth more frequently reported positive feelings about the acquisition of specific skills than the high risk youth (see items 1 - 5). Both groups felt they had learned more than they previously knew about their topic and medium,

Table 7.

Response of Low (N = 22) and High (N = 12) Risk Adolescents to 3 Month Follow-on Interview

Item	Percent Responding					
	YES		NO		DK	
	Low Risk	High Risk	Low Risk	High Risk	Low Risk	High Risk
1. Interact Better with Peers	86	75	9	17	5	8
2. Interact Better with Adults	77	67	18	8	5	25
3. Solve Problems As a Member of a Group	91	67	0	25	9	8
4. Express Your Opinions in a Group	91	83	0	17	9	0

(table continues)

Item	Percent Responding					
	YES		NO		DK	
	Low Risk	High Risk	Low Risk	High Risk	Low Risk	High Risk
5. Start and Finish Projects	73	75	18	0	9	25
6. Use in Other Parts of My Life	91	67	9	0	-	33
7. Made Friends I Would Not Otherwise Know	91	33*	9	67	-	-
8. Learn About My Medium	96	92	4	8	-	-
9. Learn About My Topic	100	84	0	16	-	-
10. Recommend To Others	96	100	4	0	-	-

*Two teams established at one club facility primarily included youth who knew each (i.e., from the same schools and neighborhoods).

however once again a lower percentage of the high risk youth felt they had acquired new knowledge (96 and 100% vs. 92 and 84%).

All of the high risk group and 96% of the low risk group said they would recommend the program to others. When asked why they stayed with their Youth Team, common responses of both high and low risk youth were that it was fun, they wanted to learn more about the topic or medium, and they were eager to finish a product or start a new one.

Problem-Solving Analogues

To determine the types of strategies preadolescents and adolescents use to solve problems, 10 sets of dyads and triads were identified. Each dyad and each triad consisted of one Y2000V member and one or two youth matched by age, grade, sex, race, and risk status. These dyads and triads were given two hypothetical situations, one at a time, and asked to come to a consensus on the best action to take. (Table 8 contains examples of scenarios to which they were requested to respond.) They also were told they would be asked why they chose the solutions they had. They were given paper and pencils for making notes, a written copy of the scenario and 5 minutes to determine their answer. Their entire problem-solving interaction was videotaped. The first phase of the assessment of the videotapes is reported herein. Certain general strategies used spontaneously by high- and low-risk youth to solve problems were identified. Table 9 presents six strategies used commonly by the youth, a definition of the strategy, and an example of each strategy. The general strategies presented in Table 9 were evidenced by all or a

majority of the dyads/triads. The first three strategies, brainstorming, turn-taking, and consensus building appeared to be key problem-solving strategies.

Table 8.

Sample Problem-Solving Scenarios

Topics	Examples
Drug/Substance Abuse	Your friend tells you she's seen her parents use crack. She says, "What should I do?" **What do you do? Why?**
Teen Pregnancy/ Parenthood	Your best friend (John) tells you his girlfriend (Sue) is 1 month pregnant. Sue has told her parents about the pregnancy, and they want to speak with John and his parents. John told Sue he needs some time to tell his parents. John tells you that he has decided to make up a reason that his parents cannot meet with her parents. John says, "I feel bad that Sue got pregnant, but "I'm moving to New York, and Sue and I won't be together anymore. She'll just have to take care of this by herself." **What do you do? Why?**

(table continues)

Topics	Examples
Injury/Death	You're in math class. You look over at the girl across from you. She is writing a letter. It says, "Dear Wilma, I'm sorry I had to do this, but my parents, school, and everything else that is going on is just too much for me to take any more. Hank's breaking up with me is more than I can handle. Please don't be mad at me for doing this. **What do you do? Why?**

Table 9.

Verbal Problem-Solving Strategies Employed Spontaneously by Youth Dyads and Triads

Strategy	Definition	Example
1. Brainstorming	Fast paced presentation of ideas pertaining to a common issue.	"I think he needs to tell his parents." "Or get a job 'til the baby comes."

(table continues)

Strategy	Definition	Example
		"They should work it out."
2. Turn-taking	Verbal activity characterized by different persons alternating speaker and listener roles.	Lee says, "Hey, cocaine kills!" "So, we'd confront our parents," repeats Sol. "Ya, 'cause we care about them," adds Lee.
3. Consensus Building	Verbal statements which appear to facilitate reaching an agreement.	"So, what do you think?" "Do you agree? Lia says abortion is the same as killing the babies."
4. Getting Involved	Tactics which get one into the conversation.	"What if he doesn't make it as a football player?" asks Todd. "Ya, if he doesn't make it, he'll . . . ," continues Mark. Red cuts in, "He'll need to be able to read."
5. Personalizing	Statements relating an individual's past.	"No way, I'm not going to jail!" "My 25 year old

(table continues)

Strategy	Definition	Example
	experience or reveal strong present point of view.	uncle sold drugs to this 13 year old girl, . . . " "The cops threw my uncle on the ground, in the sand spurs and . . . ."
6. Convincing	Verbalizations which are used to get others to agree.	"You really don't think . . . ." "He should get a job and support her and the baby (Repeated many times)."

In each session, the dyad/triad teams approached the problem-solving task seriously. Over 90% of all session time was spent discussing the topic, attempting to identify solutions, and forming a consensus.

At times language of identical form and content (e.g., "You're crazy, man.") functioned as different strategies (e.g., Getting Involved vs. Convincing). In conducting the analyses we learned that strategies used commonly by youth are not necessarily the same as those taught by teachers or welcomed by leaders in youth organizations. For example, in most

social-communicative training activities, youngsters are taught to "not interrupt." In our videotaped samples it was observed that young people spontaneously and frequently interrupted each other with no apparent negative affect on the discourse. Indeed, it would seem that the manner in which an interruption occurred and the balance of turn-taking were more important to the success of the interaction than the fact that interrupting occurred.

Discussion

The search to develop and validate programs which local communities may adopt to prepare local youth for making a successful transition to adulthood continues (Blalock, 1989). Youth 2000 Visions represents a prevention oriented program which has attempted to arouse the imagination, dedication, and community spirit of both high-and low-risk (pre)adolescents. In concordance with those advocating cooperative learning (e.g., Johnson & Johnson, 1980, 1986) and peer-mediated approaches (e.g., Gable, Strain, & Hendrickson, 1979), Y2000V was formulated on the premise that youth themselves have much to contribute to each other (and the community) and much to learn from one another.

While the long term benefits to Youth Team participants cannot be assessed at this time, preliminary data suggest that the Youth Team approach may be a fruitful addition to traditional community-based programs. While many secondary transition programs emphasize tutorial or academic remediation (Deshler,

Lowrey, & Alley, 1979), the philosophy of Y2000V is more akin to programs designed for the gifted and talented. In both, considerable focus is placed on developing the talents, present interests and creativity of the participants (Kitano & Kirby, 1986). Similar to Renzulli's (1977) enrichment triad model, Y2000V: (a) provided students with an opportunity to pursue a topic of their own interest, and (b) helped students identify realistic, solvable problems and find outlets for their products (answers).

Interview data indicated satisfaction of Youth Team members in their acquisition of knowledge and skills related to teen problems, the media, and their problem-solving behaviors. The youth unanimously stated that they would recommend the program to their peers. These data suggested that both high- and low-risk (pre)adolescents experienced sufficient engagement (Miller, Leinhardt, & Zigmond, 1988; Newmann, 1989) to benefit from the Y2000V. Engagement may be considered the opposite of alienation and isolation and involves participation, connection, attachment, and integration in particular settings and tasks (Newman, 1989). Miller and her colleagues reported that schools can facilitate student engagement through institutional, classroom, and personal accommodation. We suggest that community-based after-school programs which increase the engagement of youth are sorely needed. Unfortunately, at this time there are few data to guide attempts by local communities to design such programs.

Analogue problem-solving data revealed that youth spontaneously employ a variety of strategies to reach a consensus. When they were presented with a cognitive task about a controversial, relevant issue and expected to arrive at a mutually agreed upon solution, both high- and low-risk youth aggressively and effectively tackled the problem. Given this outcome, it would appear that teachers and youth leaders may find utility in constructing social milieus which challenge the ingenuity, intelligence, and concerns of (pre)adolescents.

Below are listed several recommendations for establishing Youth Teams. These suggestions are based on our experiences in Y2000V.

1. Whenever possible, group high- and low-risk (pre)adolescents to promote their mutual understanding of one another, capitalize upon the concerns they hold in common, and provide outlets for their unique views, experiences, and opinions.

2. Involvement of community agencies and businesses is central to the Youth Team concept. Provide opportunities for youth to have multiple, direct contact with community leaders.

3. Opportunity to develop and disseminate a product perceived as beneficial to other youth appeared to be highly motivating to team members.

4. To keep a high level of interest, enlist the active involvement of every team member in each stage of planning and

production. Adult Facilitators should model and practice active listening.

5. Establish mechanisms for gathering formative and summative evaluation of the program so that modifications can be made to fit local needs.

6. Initiate the Youth Team concept with the full support and understanding of the program by staff of the sponsoring organization.

7. Provide regularly scheduled opportunities for interaction and/or inservice training of staff and volunteers.

Youth 2000 Visions represents a pilot program and, as such, additional research is needed to document program effectiveness and the relative importance of various program components. Nonetheless, the Youth Team concept appears to hold promise as a context for high- and low-risk (pre)adolescents to positively affect their own lives and the lives of their peers.

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